

## **CONFERENCE POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES**

- 1.1 The Conference Secretary shall take the roll at the opening of the first business session only.
- 1.2 Any Annual Conference member who wishes to speak shall be within the established voting area of the Conference.
- 1.3 All motions and resolutions shall be presented in writing when requested by the chairman or the secretary.
- 1.4 The Annual Conference shall instruct representation of various invited causes reporting to the Annual Conference Session to limit their presentations to ten (10) minutes. A display area for information is to be provided by the Annual Conference.
- 1.5 When not otherwise provided in the Discipline, Roberts Rules of Order Revised shall govern our deliberations.

## **CONFERENCE POLICIES**

### **ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

- 2.1 It shall be the duty of each minister in charge of a church or mission to properly fill out the statistical report as ordered by the Annual Conference and submit the same to the Conference Office on or before February 1.
- 2.2 The Conference Superintendent is authorized to collect and distribute one month prior to the Annual Conference with sufficient copies for each church's conference participants the following information:
  - a. The complete minutes of the Council of Administration, including the report on nominations and the Conference budget;
  - b. A summarized report prepared by the secretaries of all boards, committees, and agencies of actions taken and proposals made by said bodies;
  - c. Recommendations outlines of all executive officers of the Conference. Full reports of all agencies, boards, committees and persons shall be duplicated and made available for distribution at the time the reports are given to the conference. Materials and reasonable secretary costs, particularly for the pre-conference report book shall become a part of the conference expense.
- 2.3 The printed report of the Conference Superintendent to Annual Conference shall include a summary statement of important ministry activities from the previous year (i.e. Pastors/Wives Retreat, Seminars, Special Emphases, etc.) and the vision for the next year. The total written report shall be limited to 3,000

words.

- 2.4 The report of the Nomination Committee (Conference Council of Administration) shall be distributed to each member of the Conference on the first day of the Conference, with opportunity for nominations from the floor until the nominations are closed and the election held.
- 2.5 The Annual Conference shall elect a secretary for each quadrennium.
- 2.6 Churches wishing to host an Annual Conference Session shall submit their requests to the Conference Council. At least, every other year the Annual Conference of the Western Conference will be held in Billings.
- 2.7 All Board minutes shall be in proper legible form with all corrections inserted in place before being given to the Conference Administrative Assistant. This responsibility is that of the Board secretaries.
- 2.8 All licensed pastors who are not ordained and who are serving Conference Churches shall be granted the rights and privileges of a member of the Annual Conference; and shall be granted the right to sit within the designated bar of the Annual Conference.
- 2.9 The Annual Conference guest speaker(s), the General Superintendent, the Conference Superintendent(s) and his wife, the Conference Lay Trustees, the Conference Lay Leaders and Office Manager shall have their mileage, meals, lodging and registration provided by the Annual Conference, to be paid from the Annual Conference Budget. Annual Conference secretarial staff will be paid an honorarium and their Conference registration. The Conference guest speaker(s) shall be paid an honorarium per session plus travel expenses, lodging and meals, as determined by the Conference Cabinet. If additional Annual Conference secretarial staff is needed, compensation will be set and granted by the Western Conference Administrative Assistant in consultation with the Superintendent.
- 2.10 Any missionaries or Para-church representatives who attend Annual Conference shall have their meals, but not travel and lodging paid from the Annual Conference budget unless specifically invited by the Conference Superintendent.

## **STEWARDSHIP OF FINANCE**

- 3.1 Local Churches starting point for tithes and offerings:
  - a. Based upon the 10% Biblical concept of storehouse tithing (see Malachi 3:8-12 and Numbers 18:25-26 and 28).
  - b. Churches are asked to give a percentage of their income in support of our conference vision, ministries and leadership. 10% is the goal. Churches are encouraged to fast and prayerfully consider the amount of their annual giving to the Western Conference that will be joyfully

shared, while at the same time the conference will extend wise grace in understanding that the local church may also be involved in global ministries, church planting and expanding building projects.

- c. The Conference will be committed to maintaining a budget within the limits of the income given from the local churches. Communication will flow both ways in understanding the heart of both the local church and the Conference so that the budget may be finalized at Annual Conference each year.
- d. The gift from the local church will be sent in monthly, by the **10th** day of the next month (i.e., January's tithe would be sent in to the Conference Office by February **10**).
- e. In addition, local churches may be asked to voluntarily participate in a special offering(s) as needed for our denomination, separate from the tithe.

**3.2** All monies from each local congregation are to be sent to the Conference Treasurer by January **10** and the Conference Treasurer will close the books on January **20**.

**3.3** Allowances will be made for travel and meals in connection with the official attendances of:

- a. Ministers serving within the Western Conference at the Annual Conference, the Pastors/Wives Retreat, and one camp session, (All three of the above items are to be taken care of by the local church. See Item **4.11**)
- b. The local church is responsible for the payment of pulpit supply, when the pastor is on vacation or attending one seminar per year for the enrichment of his ministry. (See Item **4.6,12**).
- c. All lay members of the Boards of the Western Conference should be reimbursed at the Federal Reimbursement level when such boards are called to meet. It is expected that diligent efforts will be made to keep costs of travel and meals to a minimum. Because of the additional time required in trips over **500** miles one way, and potential of additional lodging required, this lodging will be paid for in addition to transportation and food. We recommend home lodging which will be available by the church hosting the board or committee meetings. With regard to unusual circumstances, motel expenses will only be paid by the Conference with unanimous approval by the Conference Executive Committee consisting of the Conference Superintendent, the Conference Chairman, Chair of the Board of Administration and the Conference Secretary.

**3.4** The cost of the Conference Journal shall be paid from the Conference treasury.

**3.5** The host church for Spring Boards shall be reimbursed for expenses and sent a letter of appreciation.

**3.6** It is recommended that The Conference books are to be reviewed annually at the discretion of the Board of Administration.

**3.7** Boards responsible for the Conference Budget shall be as follows:

- Item I. Conference Property: Board of Administration
- Item II. Office Expense: Board of Administration
- Item III. Superintendent: Conference Superintendent Relations
- Item IV. Transportation: Conference Superintendent Relations
- Item V. Conference Expense: Board of Administration
- Item VI. Conference Office Personnel: Conference Superintendent Relations
- Item VII. Denomination: Board of Administration
- Item XII. Miscellaneous: Board of Administration
- All other items: Conference Council

**3.8** Tithing for New Churches:

a. Established Churches Joining or Restart Churches of our Conference

– 5 year plan

1st Year	0% of Tithe
2nd Year	25%
3rd Year	50%
4th Year	75%
5th Year	100%

b. Church Plant – 6 year plan

1-2 Years	0% of Tithe
3rd Year	25%
4th Year	50%
5th Year	75%
6th Year	100%

c. CHURCH PLANT: A church that begins with **10** giving units or more. The time clock would be started with the **1st** Annual Conference after the Church is organized. The organized clause will be defined by the Discipline Paragraph **701-705**. The Board of Administration will be responsible for the giving process.

**3.9** a. When Western Conference tithing revenues exceed the budget and result in a positive balance, the Conference will tithe on the Positive Cash Flow balance each year to the Denomination.

b. The remaining balance may be distributed by the Conference Superintendent, The Conference Chairman, and the Chairman of the Board of Administration. Though the decisions can be made as to where excess funds are to be given, the actual disbursement

of funds may only be done after Spring Boards meetings.

**3.10** Church Lending/Conference Grants Criteria from the Western Conference

1. Loan amount should not be more than **2** times the church's income.
2. Debt service should not be more than **1/4** of the church's income.
3. Western Conference Board of Administration will consider applications for loans or grants.
4. Western Conference Board of Administration will review church's income including tithes/ offerings, building fund collections, pledges made, pledges received (donations restricted for other purposes excluded) to ensure the income stream is ongoing and predictable.
5. Western Conference Board of Administration will evaluate the church's cash flow to determine financial solubility.

**3.11** a. Requirements for Church Due Diligence:

1. Articles of Incorporation (church charter) as filed with the state.
2. Bylaws which describe: the Governing Law, IRS Rules, Office location, Membership, meeting(s) description, Governance structure, Committee structure, Description of church's officers and personnel, Indemnification clause, Processing checks/ loans/deposits, Record keeping requirements, Dispute resolution process.
3. Copies of the deed of the church property.
4. Insurance coverage: property, professional liability, directors and officers liability.
5. Copies of tax records – payroll tax forms, housing allowance designations, any records that are filed with the federal, state or local government.
6. Accurate financial record keeping system for all donors.
7. Accurate minutes of all board and committee meetings.
8. Background check system for all employees/volunteers (many insurance companies require).

b. Recommendations for Church Due Diligence:

1. Clearly defined organizational structure for the church (e.g. a description of the requirements, duties/responsibilities of the governing board(s) of the church.
2. List of members/attendees – periodic review of members/attendees list.
3. An organizational chart illustrating lines of supervision/authority in the church and its relationship to the conference superintendent.
4. Personnel policies/procedures manual.
5. Position descriptions (job descriptions) for all employees and volunteers.

6. Clearly defined employment procedures: application form, statement of belief sign off form.
7. Personnel performance evaluation system – annual evaluations for all employees.
8. Clearly defined financial process/procedures and internal controls (monthly year to date financial reports) and an annual review or audit of financials by an outside firm.
9. A fire proof safe/repository for tithes/offerings, financial, legal, insurance, and employee documents.

## MINISTRY

- 4.1** Students in seminary shall, during the time of their seminary education, be expected to attend at least one session of the Annual Conference. Each student shall be reimbursed for travel expense from the Student Aid Fund according to Federal Reimbursement rate. Registration expenses for the seminary students attending Annual Conference shall be paid from the Annual Conference Budget.
  
- 4.2** Ministers of other denominations who take work in the Western Conference must furnish written statements concerning their moral and financial integrity, said statements to be evaluated by the Conference Superintendent. A one **(1)** year probationary period must be served before such ministers are considered by the Board of Ministry for membership in the Western Conference.
  
- 4.3** A minister may make a claim for a salary deficit only before leaving the field of service.
  
- 4.4** In the event of the death of any minister, minister's wife, or minister's child, or minister's father or mother, or minister's wife's father or mother, the Conference Office Manager shall be notified immediately, and he or she, in turn, shall notify all ministers of the Conference as to time and place of the funeral. A suitable memorial shall be ordered by the Conference office manager and shall be paid from the Conference funds.
  
- 4.5**
  - a. Each active pastor, unless excused for emergency reasons by the Conference Superintendent, shall be required to attend the Annual Conference Sessions. It is strongly recommended to attend the Pastors/Wives Retreat, Prayer Summit, and one Conference Camp. We ask that the local churches resource their pastor(s) to the aforementioned Conference activities.
  
  - b. Pastors serving at Conference Camps shall be paid by local churches and receive no other payment from camp.
  
- 4.6** Paid Time Off
  - a. All pastors or Superintendent(s) of the Western Conference may be granted vacation time according to total accumulative pastoral service (including service as Conference Superintendent): One **(1)** through four **(4)** years of service two **(2)** Sundays vacation; five

**(5)** through eleven **(11)** years of service three **(3)** Sundays vacation; and twelve **(12)** years and beyond four **(4)** Sundays vacation. The local church is to be responsible for the payment of pulpit supply.

- b. Sick leave policy in cases where a pastor is unable to be serving the church due to a prolonged or disabling illness or injury: The local church of which the ill or injured pastor serves shall pay the pastor's salary for sick leave time accumulated over the total years of pastoral service in our Evangelical Denomination as follows: Sick leave time shall accrue at the rate of two weeks per year of service until a cap of three months is reached. Examples: A pastor who has served two years will have one month of sick leave accumulated. A pastor who has served six years will have three months of sick leave accumulated. Each local church should understand this as a minimum guideline.
- c. The pastor or Superintendent(s) may have at least one **(1)** Sunday per calendar year to attend a seminar for the enrichment of his ministry; and one **(1)** Sunday per calendar year

for ministry away from his own church. The local church is to be responsible for the pulpit supply.

#### **4.7 Compensation**

- a. Pastoral compensation packages should be offered in consultation with the Superintendent.

- b. Pension

Each church of the Western Conference shall be required to provide a pension plan for their

pastor(s) that meets the guidelines set by the IRS. The church shall pay at least **12%** of all pastor(s) cash salary with a minimum of **\$1200** annually for a full time pastor regardless of the amount of cash salary to this pension plan.

- c. Insurance

Each church of the Western Conference shall be required to provide health insurance for the pastor(s) (per Discipline paragraph **593**) It is recommended that Life insurance also be provided.

- 4.8** Before any Lead pastor may accept regular gainful employment in other than his ministerial responsibilities, or engage in the pursuit of additional scholastic training, he must obtain permission from the Conference Superintendent and/or the local Church Council.

#### **4.9 Retired Pastors**

- a. Meals, lodging, and mileage shall be provided for all retired ministers of the Conference and their wives or widows who reside within the Conference boundaries at Annual Conference, Pastors/Wives Retreat, and camp. It is expected that diligent efforts will be made to keep the cost of traveling to a minimum.
- b. Retiring ministers or a minister's widow who has been widowed while in active service with her husband shall be assisted with moving expenses to any point within the bounds of the

Conference or to the Conference boundary.

**4.10** The Conference Superintendent(s) and his family shall have their camp fees absorbed by the camp they attend. The Conference Superintendent(s) and his family shall have the costs of attending any Conference or Denomination event paid out of the Conference expense budget.

**4.11** The Annual Conference shall license and commission Special Ministries personnel when needed. This will include Directors of Christian Education, Ministers of Music, Youth Ministers, Counselors, Interim Pastors, etc., who are not ordained elders. Requirements for a commissioning shall be the same as that of a Probationer. Training and experience leading to a formal "commissioning" will be determined by the Conference Board of Ministry. The equivalent of one year's service in their respective area of ministry and **3/4** majority vote of all ordained elders will be required before commissioning. These persons shall be responsible to the Conference Superintendent, Board of Ministry and the local church where they are serving. If they are serving in a local church, their employment shall cease when the senior pastor leaves the field of service. They may continue temporarily and may be reassigned in consultation with the new senior pastor, Local church Leadership Team and Conference Superintendent.

**4.12** a. The local church (represented by whatever body they choose - Pastor/Parish Relations Committee, Council of Administration, local church elders or lay leaders, congregational vote, etc.) shall affirm any pastoral assignment made by the Conference Superintendent before such an assignment can become effective. A local church may be actively involved in the selection of a pastor. When a local church desires any change of Lead pastor, or is seeking a pastor to fill a vacancy, the Conference Superintendent shall be the first one contacted. Any assignment shall not become effective until affirmed by the Superintendent.

In effect, it is being stated that any assignment of a Lead minister to a local congregation must have the concurrence of all three parties involved: Superintendent, minister, and local church. Concurrence means "agreement, to be in one accord, acting together to bring something about." (Refer to the **2010** Discipline, paragraph **502 (1) b**)

b. The local church leadership may hire staff members and inform the superintendent of the hire.

**4.13** Each itinerant elder currently serving a Western Conference church, by accepting their assignment at Annual Conference is declaring their agreement with the "Declaration of Faith" Article IV of The Discipline of the Evangelical Church. This statement along with their names will be included as a page in the Conference Journal.

## GENERAL

**5.1** Included in each Conference Journal shall be a listing of the following:

- a. The Ministerial Assignments for the Annual Conference.
- b. Contact information for the following:
  - i. Western Conference Churches
  - ii. Western Conference Ministers (including their Records)
  - iii. Western Conference Lay members
  - iv. Missionaries of the Western Conference
  - v. Affiliated organizations of the Western Conference
- c. The Officers of the Conference, and the members of the Boards of the Conference.
- d. The Officiary of the Conference Lay organizations, and Constitution of Conference organizations.
- e. Conference Calendar, Conference Daily proceedings: Board reports, etc.

**5.2** Each local church shall keep an official membership roll.

**5.3** There shall be a Conference Superintendent Relations Committee composed of at most eight **(8)** persons: The recommended make up would be: the Conference Chairman, a lay person from North Dakota, a lay person from Montana, and a lay person from Wyoming, a Regional Overseer from North Dakota, a Regional Overseer from Montana, and a Regional Overseer from Wyoming. All shall serve for the quadrennial. This Committee shall meet at least annually, with or without the superintendent's knowledge. They shall elect their own chairman and secretary. The duties of this committee shall be to offer recommendations to the Conference Superintendent so as to make his supervision of the Conference more effective; and to the Council of Administration relative to the salary, travel expense, housing, and general welfare of the Conference Superintendent.

**5.4** The Conference shall elect each quadrennium a chairman nominated by the Conference Superintendent for the Annual Conference with the same qualifications as the Superintendent. The Conference Chairman shall be a member of the Conference Cabinet, Conference Superintendent's Relations Committee, and shall preside as chairman and parliamentarian of the Annual Session and Conference Council of Administration. He shall also be a special counselor to the Superintendent.

**5.5** The Conference Cabinet, as an advisory council to the Conference Superintendent, shall consist of the Superintendent, the Conference Chairman, the Conference Secretary and the chair of the Board of Administration.

The representatives from the Board of Administration shall be members of the Council of

**5.6**

Administration, and shall become voting members of Annual Conference.

- 5.7 The Conference Superintendent, by virtue of his office as Conference Superintendent, will be a voting member of the Board of Administration.

## SUPERINTENDENT

- 6.1 The Conference Superintendent shall be acquainted with the heartbeat of each church (the vision, the needs, the budget, etc.) through regular communication.

- 6.2 The Conference Superintendent shall be editor in chief of the Conference news.

- 6.3 The Conference Superintendent shall be a pastor and caretaker to each pastor and his family.

- 6.4 The Conference Superintendent shall assess each pastor's skills and gifts; emphasizing the areas of Preaching, Communications, People Relationships, Visitation and Administration.

- 6.5 The Conference Superintendent shall give priority to helping pastors in areas where they need help and improvement.

- 6.6 The Conference Superintendent may develop pastoral teams for mentoring and accountability in order to promote improvement in leadership and people skills. He may also work through the Pastor Parish Relations Committee in the support of their pastor.

- 6.7 The Conference Superintendent shall work with the Conference Superintendent's Relations Committee and the Conference Office Manager to continually evaluate the ministry and ministry description of the Conference Office Manager.

- 6.8 The Superintendent Housing Assistance Loan Fund shall be maintained only as a means for a Conference Superintendent to borrow from, to help get housing. The amount in this fund is to be **\$60,000** with the Superintendent allowed to borrow up to **\$50,000**. The remaining **\$10,000** along with pay back will be available for a new Superintendent to use until the old Superintendent completes payment of the loan. If the Superintendent is not using these funds during his term, the money will be available to be loaned out for a short time with the stipulation of immediate pay back if the Superintendent needs it. The payback of this loan will be done with a balloon payment at the end of a Superintendent term that can be refinanced. This is done to keep the payback payment more reasonable.

The Conference Superintendent term of office shall be four **(4)** year terms with no limitations on the terms of office (Discipline, paragraph **820**)

- 6.9

## **BOARD OF ADMINISTRATION**

**7.1** When a Church has been placed in a restart mode, the assets (and title) of the Church are to be transferred into the receivership of the Board of Administration of the Western Conference. It is suggested that we keep a financial account open at a local bank with a designated treasurer and a local Church representative be appointed (until the transition time is completed with either a re-start, or final closure and liquidation). The Conference Superintendent and a member of the Board of Administration are to be assigned to represent the Conference Board of Administration. The closure/restart process could follow the suggested model below:

- a. Transfer of the title to the Western Conference and filing of proper legal paper work.
- b. Inventory real and personal assets.
- c. Transfer financial assets to Western Conference and appoint a local representative, if applicable.
- d. Review insurance considerations and transfer policy to Western Conference.
- e. Formulate a written rental agreement if necessary.
- f. Inspect the property and take winterization into consideration.
- g. All funds and property will be held in trust according to restart schedule.
- h. Appraise, list and sell property when appropriate. Continue good relational communication with the remnant and allow for the church community to have the first opportunity to claim physical property.